McLaughlin, Richard G

May 1918

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McLaughlin, Richard G

RICHARD G. McLAUGHLIN, D.D.S.
54 COLLEGE STREET
TORONTO

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May 6th 1918

Sir Robert Falconer.
69 St.George Street.
Toronto.

Dear Dr. Falconer:-

I am taking the liberty of writing you a personal note on a matter that has caused me as a dental practitioner some considerable thought. Some time ago I noticed in the public press an announcement that the University of Toronto had joined hands with an organization known as the Canadian Oral Prophylactic Association for the purpose of conducting research work within the domain of dentistry. As you no doubt are aware this company is composed of a number of dentists who have banded themselves together under charter for the purpose of manufacturing a particular tooth paste known and registered as Hutax, upon which they receive a royalty from the chemist who prepares the nostrum for the market.

It seems quite evident that a dental or medical practitioner who lends his name and influence to the manufacture and sale, to thepublic, of a proprietary preparation is straining very seriously the standard of ethics as accepted by the better practitioner of either profession.

Also this organization I understand, is holding out as a special inducement for the purchase of this particular tooth paste the fact that the net proceeds of such sales would be used for educational and philanthropic purposes. This would seem to be taking a rather unfair advantage of competitive companies who are endeavoring to sell their nostrums solely on their merits.

I am persuaded that if a number of medical practitioners joined themselves together to manufacture and recommend to the public a particular cough nostrum in preference to any other, and brought the matter before you as president of the university for your ethical endorsation you would decidedly refuse.

As a practitioner who has given some thought to the ethical standing of our profession and who also has the added responsibility of instructing our students on this particular subject, I am particularly anxious that our young men should have every inducement afforded them to

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build up and conduct a purely ethical practice. I trust therefore that the university will not take any steps that will hinder us in our efforts to clear up this undesirable situation in our midst.

I remain -
Most sincerely yours -

R G McLaughlin

May 10th, 1918

Dr. Richard G. McLaughlin,

54 College Street, Toronto.

Dear Dr. McLaughlin:

I have gone carefully into the matter of your letter with Dean Webster of the Dental College, who is also one of those interested in the Canadian Oral Prophylactic Association. I did not mention your name to him. The facts as he has given them to me are the following. The Canadian Oral Prophylactic Association was the result of inability on the part of manufacturers to take up the preparation of the tooth-paste, Rutax. This is now very widely used without advertising by the Dental profession and evidently has their confidence. There is a very small royalty on it, the proceeds of which go entirely for education. None of the members of the Association makes a cent out of the preparation. It is recognised by the Dental profession as a high class article. The proceeds of the manufacture hitherto have been given entirely to education under the direction of a committee consisting of members of the Oral Prophylactic Association and endorsed by the Canadian Dental Association. This committee now desires that research should be conducted with the proceeds of this sale and the research can be most effectively conducted in the scientific laboratories of the University. Exactly the same principle is to be found in Liverpool and in several of the United States.

As I have looked into the matter I must say I cannot see as an outsider, that anything unprofessional is to be detected in their action. If the article is not a mere nostrum but is accepted by the Dental profession as a good preparation I do not see why it should be unprofessional for an institution to use the proceeds for the furtherance of the knowledge of Dentistry.

We have on our committee three gentlemen of the Faculty of Medicine of the University and they did not suggest when the negotiations were under way that there was anything unprofessional in the proposal.

I hope that you will regard this explanation as satisfactory.

Yours sincerely,

President.